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## **Governor Doyle Announces Winner of the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Virginia Hart Award**

Governor Jim Doyle announced today that Shawna Stringham, Conservation Warden assigned to the Viroqua station for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), is the winner of the 2008 Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award. The Virginia Hart award is given annually to a woman in state government in honor of exemplary performance in public service that improves the quality of life for Wisconsin citizens. Ms. Stringham was honored at a ceremony in the Senate Parlor of the State Capitol this afternoon. Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman praised the legacy of Virginia Hart and congratulated Ms. Stringham on her award.

"I am proud to commend Shawna Stringham for continuing Virginia Hart's legacy of exemplary public service," Governor Doyle said. "Virginia Hart was a champion for women in public service and in the workplace. She was a remarkable woman and a trailblazer who made extraordinary contributions to our state."

From rescuing people during flooding to reaching out to terminally-ill children, the Amish Community, the Ho-Chunk nation, and Vernon County landowners, Ms. Stringham's achievements demonstrate a steadfast commitment to public service. The DNR expressed their pride that Conservation Warden Shawna Stringham is this year's Virginia Hart recipient.

"In the three years that Ms. Stringham has been working as a Conservation Warden, she has made significant contributions to the community," Secretary Matt Frank said. "She has been an outstanding ambassador for the DNR and for the State of Wisconsin."

The awards were given in honor of Virginia Hart, Wisconsin's first woman cabinet member. Virginia Hart served as Secretary of the Department of Regulation and Licensing, chairperson of the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations, and as chairperson of the Labor and Industry Review Commission. Upon her retirement from state service in 1983, friends and colleagues established a fund in her name for recognizing a woman in Wisconsin state service each year. On March 24, 2007, Virginia Hart passed away at the age of 92. Virginia Hart's grace and integrity will be missed by many who knew her.

The Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award is administered by the Office of State Employment Relations.